Authentic Leadership in the Virtual Workplace: *Strangers in a Strange Land*

Liz Keever, Facilitator

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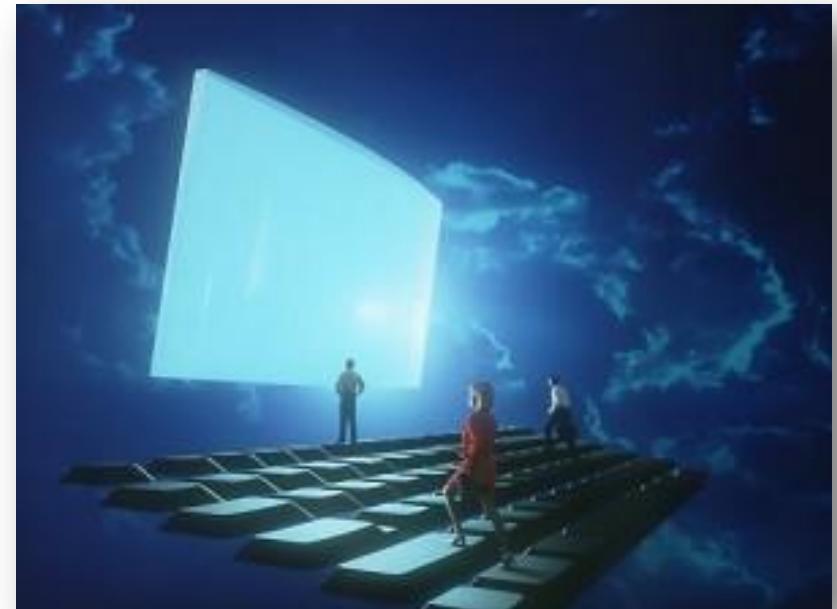
Liz Keever

- 27 years - Training & Leadership Development

- M.A. in Strategic Communication & Leadership

- Adjunct graduate faculty at New York University

Current Clients
- Chubb
- Citigroup
- Cornerstone Research
- IBM
- New York University –
  - Stern School of Business

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Today:

1. Understand the **need for more structure** in a virtual workplace

2. How to **design interactions** that are unique to the challenges of virtual communication.

3. How to **build stronger relationships** through virtual communication.

4. How to empower your **leadership** presence in the virtual workplace.

Our Plan

- The Big Idea

- Challenges of Virtual Communication

- The Top 10 Tips for Authenticity in Virtual Work

Short Q&A breaks about every 20 minutes

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The Big Idea

Being an authentic leader means being "real" but how can we be "real" in a virtual workplace?

Some Things Never Change

- Leadership is a relationship.
- Do What You Say You Will Do.

Challenges of Virtual Communication

- Loss of Context and Non-verbal messages
    - Jeopardizes understanding of meaning
- Cultural Differences
    - Low or high context cultural communication
- Sharing Information
    - Technology needs to cooperate
- Trust
    - Difficult to establish and may put communication in jeopardy
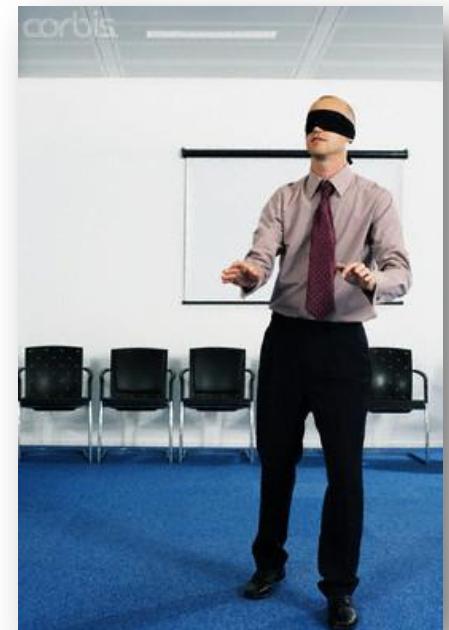
Source: Barrett, D. (2008) "Leadership Communication" p. 291-292

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How We Get Messages

Text
7%

Sound
38%

Visual
55%
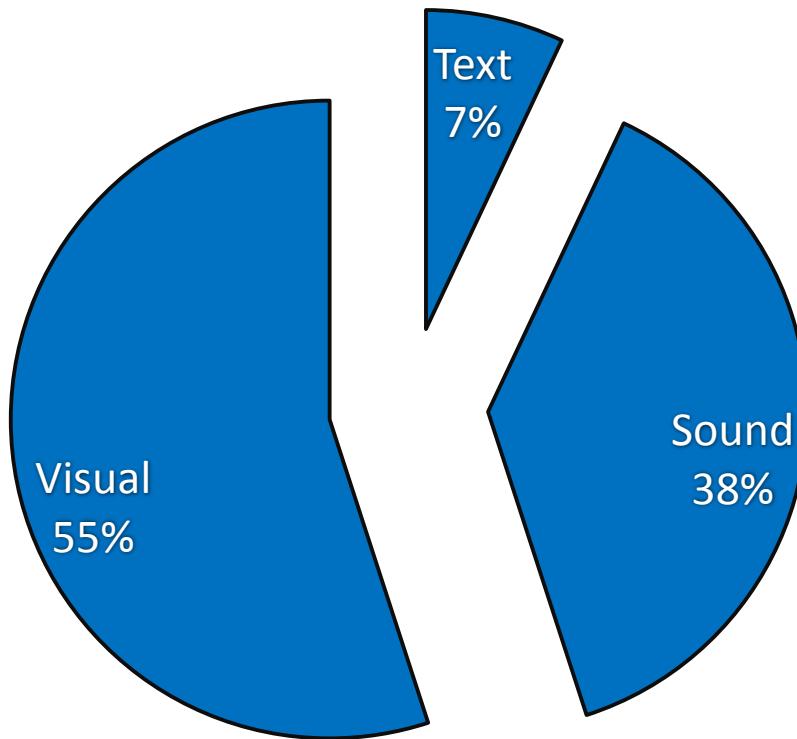
From "Silent Messages" by Dr. Albert Mehrabian (1971)

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So…

What does that mean to us?

Structure in the Virtual WorkPlace

"A virtual team needs to have even more structure than a traditional team and must spend even more time on basic good team practices, such as having a clear purpose and objectives, establishing ground rules, creating work plans and developing team communication protocols."

Source: Barrrett, D. (2008) "Leadership Communication" p. 292

Virtual environments can threaten employee engagement.

The 3 Basic Elements

– Plan for Your Medium

– Guide Your Team

– Empower Your Presence

Plan for Your Medium.

Different medium = different plan.

Rule #1

Prepare to engage.

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Because…

We are NOT a "captive" audience.

We are…

EASILY DISTRACTED

Focused Attention

A short-term response to stimulus that attracts attention.

A maximum of 8 seconds

I AM NOT EASILY DISTRA--- Ooooh! Lookie...!

Sustained Attention

Lapsing and Refocusing

A level of attention that produces consistent results.

Generally about 20 minutes

How?

- Short bursts of new content followed by rest
- Engage with questions
- Assign tasks and responsibilities

How?

Open Questions that get folks Engaged and Interacting:

What are your thoughts?

Where should I elaborate?

What is your reaction to this section?

Where did I confuse you?

What are your concerns about what you see here?

What challenges do you have?

What area should I review?

How would you anticipate using this information?

Rule #2
Clarify context and meaning.

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Because…

When we don't know what the message "has to do with anything" we are not likely to pay attention to it.

When we see the **WIIFM**

we are more likely to …**PAY ATTENTION**.

Connect
the
Dots

15 14
16 12 13
19 11
       10
17   7
             9
18   8
    3   4
20
1 2 5 6

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Because…

- We are easily distracted – struggle to focus

- Messages are harder to follow

- Virtual audience hesitant to ask questions

How?

Answer the participants' questions:

Why are we on this call?

What is our objective?

Who else is on this call?

Why are they on this call?

What is the meaning of all this?

How does it fit into the "big picture?"

So what?

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How?

Provide:

- Links to other sites

- Attachments for review

- Videos of related users and stakeholders

Rule #3

Use e-mails for facts not feelings.

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Because…

- Loss of valuable visual cues can create misunderstanding

- There is a tendency to use e-mail to communicate negative messages according to a study*

Source: S. Kiesler & L. Sproull "Group Decision Making" 1992

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How to Plan for Your Medium

1. Prepare to engage.

2. *Clarify* context and meaning.

3. Use e-mail for facts not feelings.

Guide Your Team

If I cannot see you – I am not sure how to behave.
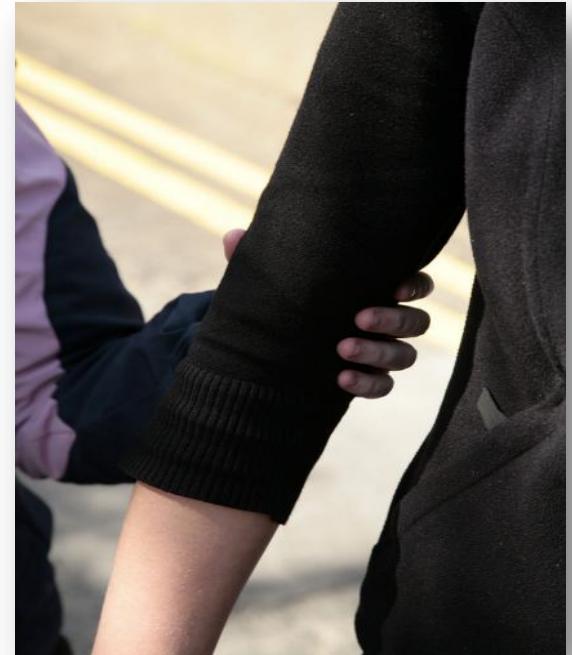
Rules are not necessarily sacred, principles are.

~ Franklin D. Roosevelt

Rule #4

Create group guidelines.

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Because…

- The lack of visual cues and different cultural norms demands more proactive management of expectations.

"A virtual team's trust radius needs to be larger than a traditional team's."

"Mastering Virtual Teams" Duarte & Synder - 2006

How?

Create a healthy balance between

- Synchronous work

- Asynchronous work

- Face-to-Face

- Phone

- Online Communication
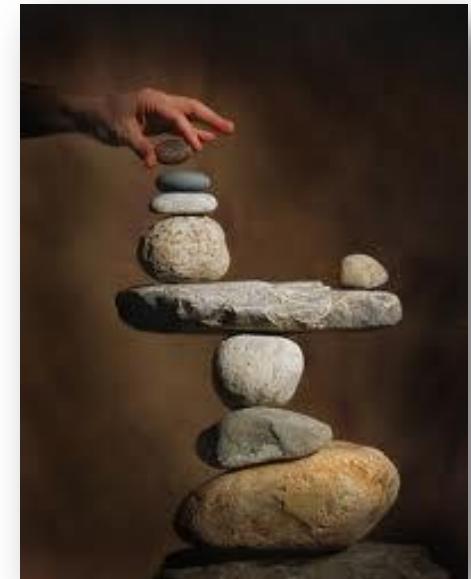
How to...

Have a good phone meeting.

Answer:
- *Who said that?*
- *Where are we now?*
- *Where are we going?*
- ***What have we accomplished so far?***

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Rule #5

Clarify the question before you answer.

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Because…

- Perhaps not everyone heard it
- Perhaps **you** didn't understand it correctly
- You perceived hostility where there was none
- You'll have time to craft a better answer
- Virtual environments easily create misunderstanding

Rule #6

Use the power of the pause.

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Because…

- Without visual cues, we don't know when to talk
- The brain is not able to comprehend spoken words that differ from text on the slide.

How?

- Manage expectations

- Use short Sentences

- Explain silence

- Let people review complexity in silence then talk

Marketing Value Scorecard – Quarterly update

Business Results

Market Share

#QYYYY Market Share Growth	WW Mkt	WW IBM	AG Mkt	AG IBM	AP Mkt	AP IBM	NE Mkt	NE IBM	SW Mkt	SW IBM
Product Line #1	##%	##%	##%	##%	##%	##%	##%	##%	##%	##%
Product Line #2	##%	##%	##%	##%	##%	##%	##%	##%	##%	##%
Total	##%	10.1%	##%	##%	##%	##%	##%	##%	##%	##%

#Q YYYY Competitive Market Share Growth	WW Mkt	HP	MS	Oracle	Accenture
Company Total	##%	##%	##%	##%	##%

Marketing Contribution to TSV

#QYYYY (Wk 15)	Product #1 Total Business Actual FV / TSV $M	Product #1 Marketing Quarter Close $M	Product #1 Mktg % Contribution FV / TSV	Product #2 Total Business Actual FV / TSV $M	Product #2 Marketing Quarter Close $M	Product #2 Mktg % Contribution FV / TSV	Product #3 Total Business Actual FV / TSV $M	Product #3 Marketing Quarter Close $M	Product #3 Mktg % Contribution FV / TSV	Total Total Business Actual FV / TSV $M	Total Marketing Quarter Close $M	Total Mktg % Contribution FV / TSV	Mktg % Contribution FV / TSV 1Q 2007
AG	##.##	##.##	##%	##.##	##.##	##%	##.##	##.##	##%	##.##	##.##	##%	##%
AP	##.##	##.##	##%	##.##	##.##	##%	##.##	##.##	##%	##.##	##.##	##%	##%
NE	##.##	##.##	##%	##.##	##.##	##%	##.##	##.##	##%	##.##	##.##	##%	##%
SW	##.##	##.##	##%	##.##	##.##	##%	##.##	##.##	##%	##.##	##.##	##%	##%
Total	##.##	##.##	##%	##.##	##.##	##%	##.##	##.##	##%	##.##	##.##	##%	##%

DG - Top Accounts

GEO	#QYYYY Overall Top Accounts BU Top Accounts Actual FV/TSV $M	Marketing Top Accounts Actual FV/TSV $M	#Q Marketing % contribution	FY Marketing % contribution	#QYYYY Top Accounts to CXO Program BU Top Accounts Actual FV/TSV $M to LOB Program	Marketing Top Accounts Revenue to CXO Program	#Q Marketing % contribution	FY Marketing % contribution
AG								
AP								
NE								
SW								
Total								

DG – Program Framework

Marketing contribution by Demand Gen Program	Program Investement (Full Year) $M	Marketing FY Objective $M	Marketing Q# Close Revenue $M	Marketing Q# Close Revenue $M	Marketing contribution %: Program/ Total Bus Actual FV/TSV	Qtr to Qtr compare	Marketing YTD Close Revenue $M	Program contribution % of Total Marketing contribution	Qtr to Qtr compare	E/R (Assumed)
C-Suite Program	##	##	##	##	##%		$0.0	##%		##%
Cross Industry Programs	##	##	##	##	##%		$0.0	##%		##%
Industry Specific Programs	##	##	##	##	##%		$0.0	##%		##%
Business Unit Specific Programs	##	##	##	##	##%		$0.0	##%		##%
Mid Market	##	##	##	##	##%		$0.0	##%		##%
Program Framework Total	##	##	##	##	##%		$0.0	##%		##%
Non-Framework	##	##	##	##	##%		$0.0	##%		##%
Total	$##	$##	$##	$##	##%		$0.0	##%		##%

Operational Productivity

Marketing Efficiency

Marketing Efficiency ($M)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total	Industry Benchmark	Remarks
Demand Gen Expense	##	##	##	##	##		
Non-Demand Gen Expensed	##	##	##	##	##		
Infrastructure	##	##	##	##	##		
Total Marketing Expense	##	##	##	##	##		
Marketing Revenue	##	##	##	##	##		
BU Business Revenue	##	##	##	##	##		
Marketing Expense / Marketing Revenue (E/R)	%	%	%	%	%	%	IDC
Total Marketing Expense / GBS Business Revenue	%	%	%	%	%	%	ITSMA
Marketing Throughput						$	IDC

Talent

H/C Comparison	HQ	AG	AP	NE	SW	TOTAL
WW M&C within B	#	#	#	#	#	#
WW Total within B	#	#	#	#	#	#
% M&C /Total	%	%	%	%	%	%

Executional Influence

Awareness (AIM)

Awareness Study -Qtr to Qtr Comparison	WW Q	WW Q to Q	AG Q	AG Q to Q	AP Q	AP Q to Q	NE Q	NE Q to Q	SW Q	SW Q to Q
Brand Consideration	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##
Helping your company to innovate	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##
Unaided business value provider	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##
Business value brand rating	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##
Bus./IT orientation for delivering business value	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##
Favorable business environment composite	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##	##

Thought Leadership/References

Thought Leadership	#QYYYY	#QYYYY
Executive briefs, summaries, and scripts	##	##
External newsletter subscription	##	##
Bylined articles	##	##
Business value and ITM references	##	##

Web Metrics

Digital / Web Traffic Overview	#QYYYY	#QYYYY	% change
Reach (Volume)			
Page Views (thousands)	##	##	%
Visits (thousands)	##	##	%
Unique Visitors (thousands)	##	##	%
Acquisition (Growth)			
New Visitors (thousands)	##	##	%
Visits from Search Engines (thousands)	##	##	%
Visits from ibm.com/internal pages/ibm search	##	##	%
Retention (Loyalty)			
# Return Visitors (thousands)	##	##	%

Campaigns & Tactics

#QYYYY In-Market	Campaigns (#)	Tactics (#)	Validated Leads (#)	Validated Lead Rev. ($M)	Avg. V-Lead Rev. per Tactic ($M)	#Q Avg. V-Lead Rev. per Tactic ($M)
AG	##	##	##	$	$	$
AP	##	##	##	$	$	$
NE	##	##	##	$	$	$
SW	##	##	##	$	$	$
Grand Total	##	##	##	$	$	$

How to Guide Your Team

4. Create group guidelines.

5. Clarify the question.

6. Use the power of the pause.

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Empower Your Presence.

The virtual workplace means we must work harder to be human.
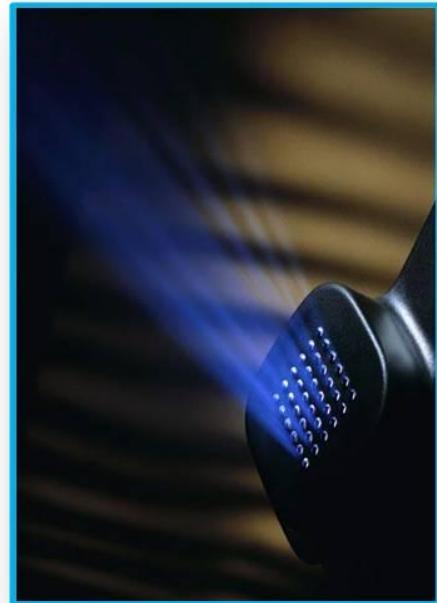
In a networked world, trust is the most important currency.

~ Eric Schmidt, Executive Chairman of Google

Rule # 7

Make it personal.

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Because…

To **trust** you, your team must:

- Know you

- Like you

- Respect you

- See your consistency

How?

- Tell a personal story or anecdote
- Ask others about their lives
- Learn about other cultures
- Use video
- Blog

Rule #8

Express yourself vocally.

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Because…

- A strong voice inspires **trust and security**.

- Projected voices **get attention** more easily.

- More **volume means more energy**.

- We "tune out" repetitive sounds.

- Variation supports meaning.

Insider Tip:

Stand up and move as you speak.
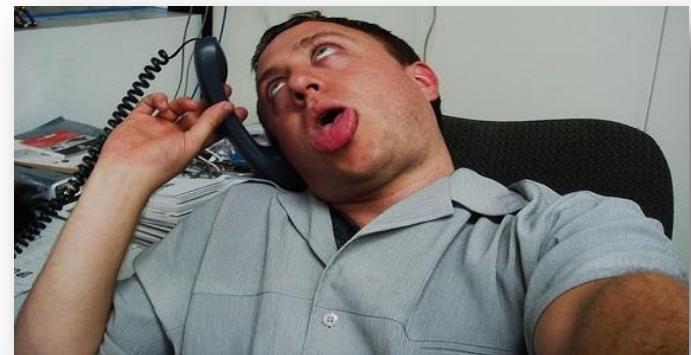
How?

Vocal Variables	←	→
Pace	Slow	Fast
Pitch	Low	High
Volume	Loud	Soft

Rule #9

Talk don't read.

Because…

- Reading text creates a rigid unapproachable presence.
- When you know your topic so well that you can just talk about it, we perceive you as more confident and want to engage.
- We read to children to help them fall asleep…

Rule #10

Be even more

positive in tone.

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Because...

- The Misses...
  - Misunderstanding
  - Miscommunication
  - Misinterpretation
  - Mistaken

Give the kind of energy you want to receive.

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How?

- Smile
- Mirror on your desk
- Positive language
- Self-deprecating humor
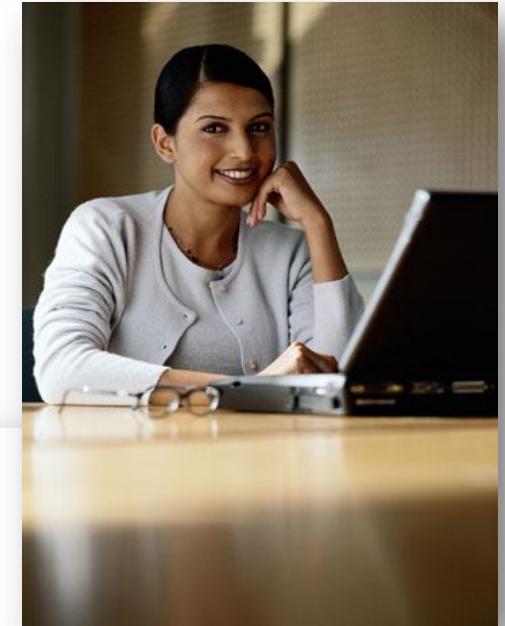
How to Empower Your Presence

7. Personalize your messages.

8. Vary your voice.

9. Talk don't read.

10. Be even more positive in tone.

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Top 10 Tips Authentic Leadership

1. **Prepare to engage.**

2. **Clarify context and meaning.**

3. **Use e-mail for facts not feelings.**

4. **Create group guidelines.**

5. **Clarify the question before you answer.**

6. **Use the power of the pause.**

7. **Personalize your messages.**

8. **Express yourself vocally.**

9. **Talk don't read.**

10. **Be even more positive in tone.**

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Once we rid ourselves of traditional thinking we can get on with creating the future.

~ James Bertrand

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